

Series I
Correspondence,
1932-1973

Box 1, Folder 16

January 15, 1944
- April 12, 1944

Frame: 0538

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AND PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS
HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

Wednesday -

Memorandum for Captain Austin:

1. The question of morale has always been of intense interest to me. One method of handling it at sea is to keep your personnel fully informed, consistent with security.
2. These addresses (?) here enclosed are some of the information talks that I gave on the Minneapolis during the past year.
3. I think that, possibly, Admiral Nimitz might be interested in seeing them.
4. Please return.

R. W. Bates.

0540

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

5 January 1944.

Dear Johnnie:

I don't know whether or not you have answered my letter of 17 December but if you have then what I have to say may have been already answered. If you have not, I hope that you will answer by air-mail immediately, as I must have some action if possible before we start on a new operation.

In analysing my situation here I find that my Executive Officer, of the class of '24 is probably a selected Captain and therefore you may not decide to let him remain on board too long and three of my Heads of Departments, John McGavock Grider, 71380; Alton Enosh Parker, 71514; and DeWitt Clinton McIver, Jr., 71524; may soon be detached as they are now Commanders. McIver has served on board 43 months and is First Lieutenant, while both Grider, Navigator, and Parker, Senior Engineer Officer, have served 30 months, and Hogle, my Executive Officer, but 5 months.

When I look over the Lieutenant list, there are one or two who might be suitable to build up to Navigator but they have requests in for aviation or postgraduate work and this class for Head of Department of a CA is really too junior. Unless I hear definitely that they will not be detached, they will not be considered available for training for any special relief.

I still say, come what may, that I require A-number-1 Lieutenant Commander to train for Head of Department and one Commander for training as Executive Officer. I seem to be quite alright otherwise as the only requests I have out of 85 officers are in this group of lieutenants, with two requests by Lieutenants (jg). As I said before, the lieutenants have come to me and said that it wasn't that they were anxious to leave the Minneapolis but they see, at the present anyway, that officers with an air designation are commanding most of the task groups. I have told them that after the war, present planes would become obsolete so that perhaps once again the air arm would be reduced very considerably in size whereas the surface ships and submarines, which would not become obsolete at such a rate, would be maintained.

Could you tell me this: Are Lieutenants John Brayshaw Kaye, 82925; Otis Clarence Ferrell, Jr., 95387; and Hugo Schmidt, 123461, to be ordered to aviation and are Lieutenants Ernest William Dobie, Jr., 85254 and Kendall Washburn Simmons, 123460 to be ordered to postgraduate work? I must know this so that I can train suitable reliefs.

Best regards and hoping for a prompt air-mail reply, I am

Your old friend,

Captain J.W. Roper, USN
Bureau of Naval Personnel,
Arlington Annex,
Arlington, Virginia.

R. W. Bates,
Captain, U. S. Navy.

0541

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

CONFIDENTIAL

9 January 1944.

Dear Admiral Kalbfus:

Just a short note to tell you I hope that everything is well with you and that you are enjoying life in the big city of Washington. I realize that, at this time of the year, the weather conditions are not too good and golf probably isn't good either which makes it bad. However, I hope that you are able to play enough because I know that you love it and because it will assist you in keeping in good health.

There isn't anything new to report from this end. Since I last wrote you, things have run along about as usual. I see a great deal of the Planners, as most of them are ex-War College men and many of them had been students of mine. On Christmas Day I gave a luncheon on board and had as my guests, five Colonels and Captains who were either graduates of the Naval War College or had been students of mine in the War College phase of the U.S. Staff College, and we really had a swell time. One of them was Jimmy Carter.

There isn't any doubt in my mind, and probably not in anyone's else mind, but that your proud visions are now paying dividends in full. As you have so often said, war can not be won without adequate planning and, fortunately, the men whom you taught, practically with your own hands, are now in the spots where their trained minds can function.

I noted, in a paper published in this area, the following from General P.C. March, former U.S. Chief of Staff, quote: "This country, the last of the great military powers, finally has adopted the old Prussian Military Plan and its system of plotting and planning battles before armed forces go into action." Well, this is of course, exactly what you have always favored and, in my case, it is what I have favored, and apparently it has now become, or is fact becoming, everyone's favorite. I still get infuriated when I see officers promoted to flag rank who have not been students of war at anytime. I can not understand what impels the powers that be to make such promotions. I know that they desire to win the war as much as I do and therefore the reasons must be very sound but I frankly do not know what they are.

I saw a new Admiral the other day and I said to him. "Congratulations on your new stars." He looked at me and said, "I don't know how I got them. I am not a graduate of the Postgraduate course nor of the War College." To which, I replied, that it wasn't necessary to be a graduate of the War College to be a good leader, but failing in that, it was almost absolutely necessary that ~~new~~ graduates study war as a hobby. To that, the Admiral replied, "I have never educated myself in war in any way and I have certainly never studied anything about war anywhere." Naturally I was quite astonished although I had suspected it. I possibly might be a "nut" on the subject, but I can not see

0542

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

why it is that any officer in the Navy would think it smart not to study his profession thoroughly.

After our first operation, I watched air power and gun power in action on an atoll and then I wrote a three page forecast of future operations and lessons learned. Some attention was paid to it before Tarawa, but after Tarawa it received considerable attention. I received a memorandum from Commander Cruisers saying to me in part: "Please accept my congratulations on your forecast indicated in your serial 00148 of 13 October which I have just seen. What an estimate that was! How right it proved to be."

I try to analyze each operation as it comes along from the position I am in, rather than from the High Command, although the High Command's Planners have suggested that someone should criticize their plans as they never hear anything critical. It is my belief that if officers would analyze their own phase of the operation the results would be surprisingly fine, and then the cost of the war and the war's duration might be reduced. Unfortunately, the Navy officers, in my estimate, all are very reluctant to put their names down on anything. We have all seen, at the War College, that nearly every officer is afraid to open his mouth. As Admiral Frank Clark used to say the reason for this was: "The higher the monkey climbs the tree, the more he shows his hind side." Most officers prefer to be quiet lest they be wrong. This is a strong indictment but it is a true one and it is one that we find in the fleet today.

With best regards to you and Mrs. Kalbfus, I am as ever,

Yours sincerely,

R.W. Bates,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

Admiral Edward C. Kalbfus, USN,
General Board,
Navy Department,
Washington, 25, D.C.

0543

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

9 January 1944.

Dear Admiral:

I can not begin to tell you with what sincere regret I learned that you had been detached from duty as Commander Cruisers here and had been assigned to Mare Island Navy Yard as Commandant. I say regret advisably, for if you can take the opinion of one of your Captains, there isn't anyone who could have done the job you have done here. The vast volume of analysis and guidance you have put out, the smart manner in which your office and your ships operate, the successful actions of your ships, all lead to the fact that you are an outstanding Commander. For your own sake I am glad that you have the opportunity of being back in the States again with your family, and for the sake of Mare Island Navy Yard, I am glad that you are there. I know that in your heart you would prefer to be out here with us and I know that we would prefer to have you here also, but the war is being run in a manner which, I hope, is best for the whole team and probably it is best, for at least the present, that you be given the job of straightening out the Mare Island Yard.

I found Mare Island, when I was there, to be an excellent yard and I think that you probably will find that your Manager, Captain Crisp and your Production Officer, Captain Leggett, are both very fine indeed. There is a good spirit in the Yard although there is 10% absenteeism all the time. The principal weakness was, in my opinion, that the leading civilian employees often fail to give the truth of the picture to the division heads. We had trouble along that line. I wrote Captain Leggett a letter about that and I suppose it has been straightened out.

I know that we shall all miss you out here, not only for the job you have done, but because of the friendly and cooperative way which you approached your Captains and allowed them to approach you.

Best regards to you. With keen disappointment that I wasn't able to see you before you left, although I made two efforts, I am,

Very sincerely,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

Rear Admiral M.S. Tisdale, USN,
Commandant,
Navy Yard,
Mare Island, Calif.

0544

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

9 January 1944.

Dear Jack:

A lot of water has flown over the dam since I last saw you in San Francisco when you were suffering from that stomach ulcer. I am glad to hear that you are now fully recovered, and my last report had you wandering about with Admiral Rosendahl. I am glad to hear it. It is too bad that you are not out in this area so that I might have the pleasure of renewing our acquaintance which I shall always treasure. The six months we were together at the War College is a high light in my life and the name "Jack Bergen" will never bring other than the most friendly thoughts to me. You are a hell of a fine fellow!

We have had a most interesting time out here in the Pacific since I joined up here. We have been in three major operations and, even though I say it myself, we acquitted ourselves very creditably indeed. I have received the most friendly comments from many, both directly and indirectly, and I think the good ship Minneapolis has her head among the leaders. We have an excellent ship, a very fine body of men with high morale, a fine body of officers who are improving under the hard test of war, and a camouflage which fools them all. You can readily see that I am more than a little pleased with the "Minnie".

I don't know where this letter will find you, or what you are doing, but I presume that the Secretary has you wandering around somewhere where your trained mind can accomplish the most good. I certainly wish you could make our next operation with us because it would be an awful lot of fun to have your friendly and capable self around me.

I received a Christmas card today from one of the Waves, to wit, Jane Leeds, written from her home in Kansas City. It was nice of her to think of me at such a time because she was evidently home on leave, and should have but little time to think of others far away. Those Waves at Newport, with whom we associated, were a fine lot of women and I think Jane headed the whole lot. She had more maturity, more understanding, more common sense than the rest.

The Reading Room is changing rather rapidly and, unfortunately, through the death of some of the older members. Gus White informed me that old Max Agassiz died and was replaced in that office by old Mr. Bradford Norman. "Cannon Ball" Williams died - he owned the Villa Rosa, and now lovely Mary Firestone died giving birth to her third child. She was a fine mother and a grand wife for Roger. Poor old Roger, I know this is one blow that he will never get over. I must write him a letter.

0545

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Then you know that Dr. Cerio died. He was a great friend of Admiral Kalbfus and I know this is a dreadful blow to the Admiral. I wrote him a letter about it but to date have received no response. Unfortunately, I sent the letter ordinary mail which takes at least three weeks while airmail goes in six days. So this goes airmail to you.

Please write and tell me about yourself and what you are doing, how you are getting along, also give my best regards to your beloved wife who is a swell person and who thinks quite a lot of her old man Jack.

I hope you are fully recovered from your misfortune and that time will leave you so mended that even a magnifying glass will be unable to locate that wound in your stomach which caused your retirement from the battle area. Your airplanes are doing a swell job and are bringing roses daily to the fellows who conceived them.

I am feeling very well, as you can see, but I love it much better at sea where the shells are, than in port where I happen to be at this moment. Take care of yourself.

Best wishes for the New Year, as ever,

Your old friend and pal,

R.W. Bates,
Captain, U. S. Navy.

Commander John J. Bergen, USNR,
Hotel Pierre,
New York, N.Y.

0546

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

15 January 1944.

Dear Bishop:

You may be somewhat surprised to hear from me at sea, in view of my long stay at the Naval War College at Newport, but I was fortunate in July to be detached and ordered to sea. I am now in command of this fine ship and I can assure you that I have never been more content. Our ship has been happy in obtaining as Chaplain, a very active and highly interested young Methodist Padre by the name of McComas. He has entered into ship's life with great vigor and I think that he has been most helpful. There is always a large interest in services on board this ship and our average attendance is, I should say, upwards of 250. Part of this large attendance is due to the efforts of the Chaplain who gives excellent short sermons and who conducts a thoroughly interesting service, and part to the great conviction that so many of us, who are in dangerous places, have that there is a Supreme Being watching over our destinies and to whom we can turn in case of need as well as in adoration.

I do not think, therefore, that in my experience the Chaplain Corps requires any advertising. I do not think that advertising will bring men to church. I believe instead, that the only things that will bring men to church are, one, a belief in the church and what it stands for, and two, an appreciation of the Chaplain. Both of these exist on this ship.

In view of this, you can imagine my astonishment when I discovered that many photographs had been taken of my officers and men, as well as other officers and men, during services on another ship. It appears that on Sunday last there was a joint service (Protestant) conducted by, possibly, four Chaplains, and that this service included the Holy Communion. There was a large attendance at this service from other ships, as well as from my own, and I think that the service held would have been well considered had it not been for this photography. I can understand the photographing of men sitting in church if they desire to be photographed, but I have never heard of photographing men as they were participating in Holy Communion. A number of my officers were in one of this type photographs taken and one of the officers, a Commander, said it was very disconcerting to him to be in spiritual meditation and then to be broken out of this spiritual meditation by surprise photographs (flash) being taken of him. I have informed the Chaplain that in my opinion the participation in the Holy Sacrament by any person was a spiritual communion between himself and the Creator, and was not subject to being photographed, and especially so without his (the man's) permission.

It would appear as if the reason for the joint service was far from a religious one but was rather a scheme to get a large attendance and then to photograph not only the uninformed congregation, but also the four Chaplains. You will note that there is at least one such picture. This would appear to be a publicity stunt.

0547

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

My Chaplain is quite disturbed by my attitude and he brought up to me the "Chaplain's News Letters", your interesting letter magazine - indicating a constant request for such pictures. I have told him that I could not recognize anywhere in the issues shown me where photographs, such as indicated above, were desired or requested. I further stated that where a man desires to be photographed I would offer no objection, but that, in this case, no one desired to be photographed or had requested it, or had been requested to permit himself to be so photographed, and therefore I felt that their religious rights had been most seriously infringed on.

I do hope that you concur with my view. I have such a high regard for you and for everything you have done since I have known you, that I can not but believe that you will view with alarm such interpretation as that made by the four Chaplains who conducted this service. Certainly, publicity attempts of this kind will do more harm than good. It has already decided me from attendance on any other ship but my own where I can control such activities.

With warmest personal regards to you, I am as ever,

Your old friend,

R. W. BATES,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

Captain R.D. Workman, (ChC), USN,
Chief of the Chaplain Corps,
Arlington Annex,
Arlington, Virginia.

0548

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

20 January 1944.

Dear Frog:

It wasn't so very long ago that I received one of my delayed copies of the "U.S. News" and I saw, there on the cover, the head of a Rear Admiral. I stopped immediately to see who this was and the likeness was so good that I at once realized that it was no one but yourself. Very few people ever make the inside of such a prominent magazine, and even fewer make the front cover, so it is quite evident that you are in a very select group. However, it was much more evident that you must have accomplished a remarkable job to have received such a tribute from what I have always understood to be a Republican magazine.

The Navy, of course, belongs to no party but belongs to the nation. What we expect the administration to do is to insure that the armed forces are in sufficient strength to be able to support the foreign policy of the administration. This, I should say, is definitely being done at the present.

You, in the Atlantic, started from scratch and succeeded by virtue of good planning and good common sense. I can't tell you how pleased I am over this successful result, and how pleased I am, in addition, that an old friend of mine was the principal leader, under the Ultra-High Command, of this magnificent operation. Keep it up!

We are having interesting operations in this ocean also and I can not stress too strongly how tickled I am to be in the job I am in. When I took this ship out of the yard, she was but a shell of her former self, especially in regard to personnel. I have trained her myself along my own lines, and from what I hear, as well as from what I can see, the results have been very gratifying indeed. I have found that our men are game and can be counted on to do the right thing, if properly led. We have been in three operations to date. Several of them were relatively hazardous but in each case, the conduct of every man was what was expected. I have no doubt but that you found the same thing at Casablanca.

I hope that you will remember me most kindly to every one I may know in your area. Tell them that we have full confidence out here, that under the fine planning and leadership that we are now operating under, success will be ours. You will note that I place planning before leadership because I feel that even the best leadership would have difficulty in handling modern operations without reasonable planning. I know that you personally have had some sort of opposition to the "Green Book", but the Planners here tell me that it is now in constant use on all large staffs. Fortunately, Admiral King, in that great wisdom which has always characterized him, has placed men trained in the War College, or in the U.S. Staff College, or both, in positions where they could use their trained minds to the advantage of the fleet. The only

0549

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

book that they have is the "Green Book" and as it is well understood by these men who have been trained in it, it is naturally effective. You have been trained in it also, although not in exactly the same book as is now in use. The ideas and the manner in which you have gone about the destruction of the U-boats are exactly what might be expected from a student of the "Green Book". I am not defending the book now, and if I thought it was not doing its part, I would recommend against it as strongly as anyone else. However, I know now, as I stated previously, that it is in use out here and is evidently greatly respected.

Let me once again congratulate you on your success and let me congratulate your charming wife, who, very early in life showed remarkable judgement in choosing such an able husband.

Best to you as ever,

Your old friend,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U. S. Navy.

Rear Admiral F.S. Low, USN,
Office of the Commander in Chief,
U.S. Fleet,
Navy Department,
Washington, 25, D.C.

0550

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

21 January 1944

Dear Legs:

Our truck arrived in reasonably good shape and is now in the shop being thoroughly overhauled and repainted prior to our use. Thank you very much for sending it to us.

Two new matters have arisen on the ship which I think you should know about and which have been rather disturbing. These are:

(a) Failure of Gun Drains. When the ship was in the Navy Yard and the 5" guns supposedly were being thoroughly overhauled, it was decided, I understand, to install an improved item which consisted of a small drain pipe which was to pass through the wiring box underneath the guns. This drain pipe was supposed to be welded to the deck. We began to encounter difficulty with these guns and on investigation found, to our astonishment, that the wiring boxes were full of oil and water. This required an almost complete new wiring by the Navy Yard of all the 5" guns. Fortunately, the job could be done and has been done. It was found that the cause of this oil and water was the failure of the Mare Island Navy Yard to properly weld this pipe with the result that the sea, splashing over the deck, went under the mounts and around the drains and into the boxes. The Yard made a hell of a mess of this and of the 5" guns in general. The MINNEAPOLIS also made a mess of this because, had our inspections been correct and thorough, this would never have occurred. As you know, it was only after I had arrived on board that we went after these inspections properly. To my sorrow, these guns had been installed prior to my arrival.

(b) Steering Engines. When the MINNEAPOLIS first arrived at Mare Island, an approved request was sent in to overhaul the steering engines. This request, despite the urgent request of the ship, was overruled on the basis that it was inadvisable to touch something that was running along alright and therefore nothing was done. The Navy Yard and the Service Force of the Pacific Fleet are now trying to find out what is wrong with our control system, down to and including the Waterbury gear. Captain Hague says that they should have been thoroughly overhauled when we were in Mare Island and that the trouble now is that they are gradually wearing out. I don't consider that I have a 100% steering engine now and neither do the above mentioned agencies. I can not impress upon you too strongly the need to look into these matters on incoming ships, particularly on older ships, so that they may be fixed up for the battle line, without going through the nuisance of requiring navy yard work, after they have departed.

0551

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

21 January 1944

Outside of the above, there is nothing new to report. I wrote a letter to Admiral Tisdale when I found out he had been ordered as Commandant of your Yard, and I told him what a fine fellow and capable man I thought you were. So now that I have given you this good start, perhaps you should not show this letter to him.

Best wishes to you and Mary C. As ever,

Your old friend,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U. S. Navy.

Captain W.D. Leggett, Jr., USN,
Yard Manager,
Navy Yard,
Marine Island, California.

0552

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

25 January 1944.

Dear Jocelyn:

I appreciated very much receiving from you your interesting letter as well as the picture of Dickie in his air uniform. The picture is very good and he looks fine - but, in my mind, almost too young. Of course he is 20 years old, and therefore, practically a man, but for some reason he seems, especially in this picture, extremely boyish. Thank you for the photograph. The young fellow is evidently doing very well indeed and I know that both you and Martha are gratified at his success.

I note that you agree with Commander Hogle's plan of not paying the income tax at all, but instead, of purchasing Victory Bonds to the extent of the taxes and putting them away for future payment, if war taxes are finally insisted on. I personally have no feeling in the matter. I frankly say that, in my mind, it would be preferable to pay every quarter, but there are many others who disagree on the basis that, first, payment will not ever be required, and, two, that there is some clause somewhere which cuts down what your heir may get should you pay regularly. As usual, I leave the matter to you entirely. Certainly, out there, my income will have no increases or decreases due to market speculations because the fish do not play the stock market - at least not that I know of.

I am glad to see that you are once again serving on the committee, in the Central Valley, to handle the fourth victory loan. It is a great tribute, not only to your patriotism, but also to your salesmanship, and if last year's success is any criterion, being on these Victory Bond Committees may help the sales of your own bonds etc., rather than retard them. You will recollect that you told me not long ago that last year was your biggest year in business. I was glad to hear that and warned you then and there that you had better put that profit in competent securities rather than spend it. When one spends these days, one increases the demand for goods, and in many cases, helps boost the chance of inflation, whereas, if the money is put aside in the bank, Government bonds, or securities, it creates very little pressure on inflationary lines and becomes, therefore, a boon to the community as well as a future reserve for the owner.

I have started to pay off those loans on my insurance policies which I made to help out Norman and Edward long ago, and I believe that whatever I expend on this is removable on the income tax somehow. I paid \$250 on the Prudential one about three months ago and I paid \$300 more the other day. It is now down to \$600 and I expect to pay that off completely in the next few months, and then I plan to start paying off the bigger one. That bigger

0553

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

one makes me mad because I have let it ride for too long a time with the expectation that it would be paid. However, Edward does not seem to think it is necessary to pay it, and buys, instead, \$500 rugs for his office, so I feel that I had better fix it myself. Please do not mention this to him in any way, shape or form. I feel sure that when the time comes he will handle it. As for Lorman's case, the whole thing is a complete washout. I admit that I did not expect it to be so, but it is and that's that.

Things are going along very well with us out here and as you can read in the papers every day, somewhere in the Pacific our forces are always doing something. This is not an easy war - the Japanese are far from an easy opponent - the war will definitely not be over tomorrow - and our people are due for a serious awakening one of these days. They scream about dollars and cents, when others are spending blood. Such avarice meets but little approval in the broad reaches of the Pacific where men die for cause.

Will you ask Martha if she won't go on a tour of some of the better shops in the Sacramento area and get me a couple cans, large size, of Coleman's English Mustard (powder), and any chutney, preferably Major Greys or Colonel Skinner's that she might put her hands on. I need both of these items and they seem to be unobtainable in this area. It strikes me that up in the Sacramento Valley, things which are in demand in San Francisco, may have no sale at all. If you get into difficulties on this you might ask Mr. French to take them out of stock of the Capital Hotel!

With warmest regards to you, Martha, Bob and your married children, I am, as ever,

Your loving brother,

R. W. BATES,
Captain, U. S. Navy.

Mr. Jocelyn Bates,
2756 - 10th Avenue,
Sacramento 17, Calif.

Mailed Air Mail - 25 Jan 43 -

0554

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

13 February 1944

Dear Captain Crosby:

As I have a very deep interest in the War College, and as I realize that no one could have a deeper interest in it than you have, I am writing you this letter. What I have to say may be known to you, and yet again it may not be known at all. In either case I trust that you will not feel offended but will determine for yourself whether the situation mentioned is correct or not.

A little while ago I was at dinner with my former two assistants at the War College; one Captain J.C. who left with me and is now on the Big Staff, the other, Captain J.V. who has just come out and is serving on a lesser but still very important staff.

Naturally, both J.C. and I were quite interested in the War College and we asked J.V. what the situation was there. To this, J.V. replied about as follows: "Not very good. The Preparatory Staff Class seems to be doing about as well as usual but the Command Class is definitely receiving inferior training." He went on to say that there were two probable reasons for this. One of these was that the instructing staff was not what it should be, and therefore he was glad to be off it; and the other was that the staff had given the students a completed strategical problem to start with as a guide, and by so doing had merely succeeded in destroying the desire of most of the senior students to analyze and study, as naval officers are always looking for a check-off list - a thumb rule. He stated that the class had flopped miserably after the first problem which, because it was strategical and followed the guide fairly closely, they had done reasonably well. He further said that he had wondered himself as to what the correct method of instruction should be, and had favored the guide. At the same time he remembered that I had fought against giving the students a complete guide and that Admiral Kalbfus had also disapproved such a guide. J.V. said that he and Pare' had disagreed with Admiral Kalbfus and me at the time, had thought us wrong, and were glad to have the chance to put the idea of the guide into effect. The results were most unsatisfactory, and both he and Pare' were definitely disillusioned. He said that the students used this guide without thinking, and applied it to both strategical problems and tactical problems as well, which of course can not be done. Therefore he thought that the last class had learned nothing, and suggested that it might be well to drop the guide and go back to the slides, in a manner somewhat similar to what was used in my day. My guess was that he thought my presentation before Field Marshall Sir John Dill was about right. He also said that the presentations on the Green Book were worse than Capt. Carroll's were, which was saying plenty. Who is giving these now?

0555

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO. CALIFORNIA

13 February 1944

I asked him if he had told you about this before he left and he said no - that he had been prepared to do so but that neither you nor the admiral had asked him a thing so he decided not to volunteer it.

I am mentioning this for another reason, as well. I believe that the War College is gradually developing quite a standing out here in view of the remarkable results being accomplished through planning. War College graduates are quite in evidence now and are being well handled in the planning groups. I used to be kidded about the War College a little, but I am not so kidded any longer. I have been the advocate, since I first arrived, of increased education, of increased mental training, during war as well as before and after, and I think that now the most competent officers agree that the War College has done and is doing its duty very well indeed. I know that the practical work of running the War College falls directly into your hands as Chief of Staff, and I know, from my own experience, that you fit in there most admirably. I am writing this information, therefore, to you personally, and not to Admiral Pye, because I feel that as Captain J.V. says, you will handle it yourself.

We are going great guns out here and all of us are getting a taste of what war is about. It is mighty interesting to say nothing of being highly instructive. I feel that my training in the War College was very much up to date and is invaluable to me now. I try to analyze my part of each operation and then make recommendations with the hope that the Commanders concerned may find them valuable. I know that one of my recommendations was considered of such high importance that it was taken to the Commander in Chief himself. His gunnery officer told me the other day that this recommendation was the basis of the methods used in the present operation. There is probably a lot of soft soap in this remark but it is pleasing to hear it just the same.

I don't know who is on your staff now, outside of one or two, and when you reply to this, if you ever do, I should appreciate knowing who is there.

Please remember me to your charming wife and to your lovely daughter, both of whom are swell examples of what the Creator intended our femininity should be.

Best regards, I am as ever,

Very sincerely yours,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

Captain Howard H. Crosby, USN,
Chief of Staff, Naval War College,
Newport, Rhode Island.

0556

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO. CALIFORNIA

27 February 1944.

Memorandum for Admiral Sherman:

I think that you may safely claim that large splash as a torpedo plane. We have done so, as a possible, in our official report which you may have by now, if our Cruiser Flag has forwarded it.

You may have wondered why we did not report it before. What happened was this:

We had tracked a group of planes in but were not able to open fire because of interference by own ships. Then the North Carolina opened fire and succeeded in shooting down one plane and almost one cruiser, as her 40 MM burst directly over this ship causing many to seek cover.

After the North Carolina had ceased firing about 2313, the Minneapolis opened fire about 2314. After we had completed about two-thirds of our firing (we fired 27 Mk 32 and Mk 18 five inch), a very large splash was noted in our line of fire. This splash was immediately reported by Battle II, by After Main Battery Control, by 40 MM Control, by many lookouts, to our Gunnery Officer who is new and forgot to report it to me. It was about two days later that the First Lieutenant, Commander McIver in Battle II, came to me and asked why we hadn't claimed one possible. I told him that that was the first I had heard of it. So then I investigated and found that it was common knowledge and that the crew thought that they had (1) either damaged the plane and forced it to crash, or (2) forced the plane to crash in trying to evade our fire.

Whatever else may be said, the fact remains that there was a very large and unusual splash during our firing and in line with our fire which had all the appearances of a plane crash.

It was a wonderful operation to have been in and I am pleased to have served with you. I know that my old yachting friends, the Jessops, are pretty proud of their brother-in-law. Keep it up!

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

0557

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

UNCLASSIFIED

13 March 1944

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Dear Admiral:

Most of our mail seems to have been lost somewhere in the Western Pacific so it is a little difficult for me to know whether you have written to me, or whether you had any questions that you might be interested in having a reply to. We don't expect to get this mail for another week or ten days so I thought that without waiting I would write to you and give you a line on what we are doing.

First, I want to say that I received a letter, dated early January, which I found highly interesting and which I plan to save. It is the one in which you discussed education and training. After one of our operations here, I had a paragraph in my comments called "Mental training in war". It wasn't long but I thought that it covered in a very few words my opinion as to the need of education on broad military lines in war as well as in peace. Commander Cruisers sent for me and told me that this report was exceptionally fine and that he concurred with everything in it, except possibly the stress that I placed upon mental training. He kind of laughed when he said it, so I felt that he probably concurred with me in fact. I also received the following letter from him pertaining to an action report of one of our recent operations:

"The action report was excellent in its completeness and coherence. The special comments of Part V (Commanding Officer's Comments) of the report showed careful thought and were particularly well presented. Such reports contribute to more efficient prosecution of the war by disseminating an understanding of lessons learned in combat."

The idea of command, whether of a ship or a group of ships, is something that I do not think is, as yet, fully understood. Success in command does not merely hinge, in my mind, on the largest battalions, but instead success in command is evidenced by the commander who, in adverse circumstances, can pull victory out of defeat and can pull a force out of a tough spot and put the enemy in a tough spot as General Lee did so often.

There seems to be a feeling that if you take overwhelming forces into an action, and if the action is a success you are a great commander. This, to me, is, to use one of my favorite words, plain poppycock, and is likely to lead to adverse fortune. I personally feel that through the study of war we can discover what the qualifications of commanders should be. If we don't study in peace times the history of and the analysis of

Reg. Air Mail

0558

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

the famous campaigns of the past, we will perhaps not fully understand what is expected of us. I feel that the Germans understnad this quite well, and I have been told that they have certain commanders whom they consider effective for offensives and other commanders whom they consider effective for retirements. They have evidently learned that a different mentality is often necessary in each case.

Things are going along very well out here and I am more than pleased with my command and with what it has accomplished. As a whole, I have a fine bunch of officers who are gradually improving as time goes on, and I have a fine body of men who have been under fire more than once without the slightest sign of flinching. We have had shells come very close indeed and their whistle, or scream, is something that seems to penetrate every ear drum. In fact, an army observer who was with us asked how many men we had, and when he was told that there was over 1300 he said, "I don't see why, out of 1300 men, the Japs would pick me to fire at!" This army officer, unfortunately, was killed in action a little later while serving in my command.

I don't have to tell you how pleased I am that my officers now seem to appreciate the need for thorough planning. My motto on this ship consists of two words, "brains and thoroughness". I tell the officers I expect them to use their brains, and, by so doing, to improve their mental power, and further, that anything that they do must be thorough; that they must always think of the long range effect. For example, if a fuse blows in a line, I tell them that it is not sufficient to replace the fuse but, instead, all of the line in which the fuse is must be tested so that the cause of the failure may be found. When in port I send my doctors to the hospital and have arranged with the hospital that my doctors be given special privileges and attention. They are most grateful. I send my watch officers to the radar schools so that they can see and know what is going on in the C.I.C. Likewise, I take my C.I.C. officers and bring them on the bridge. One of the officers said to me the other day that most of them had never thought along long range lines and that they now see how silly it was to think of only the moment. I feel that the system is paying dividends everywhere.

There is nothing new to report that you don't already know. I see a number of your friends every now and then, and your name invariably comes up. I can assure you that you are held in high esteem everywhere.

0559

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

I was glad to hear that Mrs. Kalbfus is much better and from the tenor of your letter I feel that you are also in fine health. I hope that this will continue for as many years as you desire.

With best regards to everyone, I am as ever,

Your old disciple,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U. S. Navy.

Admiral Edward C. Kalbfus, USN,
General Board,
Navy Department,
Washington, D.C.

0560

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

UNCLASSIFIED

13 March 1944.

My dear Bittinger:

I have just received your wonderful Christmas card which left Washington on 7 January and arrived here in my hands on 12 March. It is true that I promised that I would write you a letter relative to the effect of the camouflage on my ship and also on the effect of the group of colors which you gave me to test against the sky in the western ocean. The reason I had not replied until now was that I had not completed my test.

Let us now consider these two items:

(a) Own camouflage: The camouflage on the Minneapolis is excellent. It is hard to keep up because of shading and likewise requires yard assistance every time we come in but I believe that to date it has been well worth it because it is effective. Upon our arrival off Pearl Harbor after leaving Mare Island, we were to pick up a pilot. After waiting off the entrance for an hour and, as night was coming on, I stood into the harbor. A pilot boat then came along side after I got into the channel and the pilot, who turned out to be the master pilot of the yard, complained bitterly to me. He said he had been directed to pick up a heavy cruiser but could see nothing but that damn destroyer. I think that it is quite interesting that the master pilot should have been so fooled. I have heard the same thing from the submarines and from the smaller ships, and I think we have likewise fooled the Japanese. I feel quite confident that, on several occasions, the Japanese shifted their fire from this ship onto the other ships in the column on the basis that I was a big destroyer where the other ships were heavy cruisers. The other day I received a signal from the IOWA, "you certainly have a fine camouflage".

(b) Camouflage colors: I have taken that little device which you gave me, which has about a dozen or more colors such as gray, white, etc. on it, and I have tried in the Marshalls, as well as the Carolines and Marianas, to find one color in that group which matched the horizon and the sky near the horizon. I regret that I could not find one case where the hole disappeared. I not only worked on this myself, but I had others trying to match the hole with the horizon, but, as I have just said, the results were negative. Some of the colors came somewhat near blending, but never close enough to give them standing. I don't know the reason for this, but it is probably because the sky, and the sky near the horizon, is brighter than your paint. I tested all day long, from morning to evening, and finally gave it up as a bad job.

I have noticed the camouflage of some of the ships and I think that it is successful in breaking up target angle and, on occasions, in making the course doubtful, but no camouflage can approach that on the Minneapolis. In the case of the IOWA, her destroyer camouflage is not bad, but not too good

Reg. Air Mail

0561

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

either. What is effective in the IOWA is this; as the sun goes down and the haze of darkness approaches, the IOWA seems to disappear also. I think the same thing applies at dawn, in other words, the IOWA camouflage is a morning and evening camouflage, otherwise it is not effective.

The IST's, I personally think are too green in color. Of course I have just been associated with them during landing operations where they are more in the water than on the beach, and so, perhaps, my comments in this case are not too valuable. However, I do believe, as I have just stated, that grayish colors are more effective than green unless the ship is to be pushed in against a green beach and is to be kept there the major portion of her time.

The LCI's have a better camouflage than the IST's but, here again, the camouflage is not too necessary because the LCI gets in so close to the beach, during landing operations, that it can be readily distinguished in all particulars by any gunner on the beach. At least this is my opinion.

I think that you are doing a very fine job there in Washington with the camouflages and, although you meet opposition from Captains, for one reason or another, usually a most unsound reason - in the end you usually sell them all. I was in the Navy Yard the other day when the Captain of a carrier was raising hell and high water to try and get his camouflage on before he went to sea. This indicates that the larger ship captains feel the need of something more than just good fortune, and I think that what you are doing is to supply a large portion of that "something".

I was glad to note that you have seen Admiral Kalbfus. No one thinks more of him than I do, and I think he has given me a broader conception of war than anyone else could possibly have done. I fell into his hands when I joined the War College at Newport and the results, I hope, have been highly effective. He is a fine man, a wonderful thinker, the Clausewitz of the Navy, and our Navy is indebted to him as much as to any other officer for the high caliber of its leaders and to the excellent planning now underway.

There isn't much else to talk about excepting this, that your Christmas card is very amusing, very much appreciated and is a remarkable likeness.

Best regards, I am as always,

Very sincerely yours,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U. S. Navy.

Commander Charles Bittinger, USN,
Bureau of Ships,
Navy Department,
Washington, 25, D.C.

0562

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

14 March 1944.

Dear Nina:

It has been a very long time since I have heard from you and I would say just as long a time since you have heard from me. I have been very busy out here working in this war, but now I have a little time in which to drop you, and through you, our beloved leader Admiral Clark, a letter.

In the first place I would like to know how the Admiral is. Has there been any improvement? Does he understand you? Can he reply at all? I hate to ask you such questions because I know that, unless he has improved, it must tear your heart to answer me, but you well know the devotion I feel toward both you and him, a sort of proprietorship so to speak, so I know that you will forgive and understand.

Out here where I am, there is so much war and talk of war that the States seem very distant indeed. It is only when we receive papers and mail from home that we awaken to the fact that the world is much greater than our immediate area and that there are people thinking of us in part of the greater world.

I often think of you and the Admiral, and of how thoughtful you always were to me, and of how helpful you were with your friendship and advice. All of us need help on occasions, and I as much as any. You and the Admiral pulled me over several rough spots and I am not unmindful. I loved visiting your home in Maine, I know that both of you did also, and I hope that this summer the situation regarding the Admiral may be so improved as to permit you both to go there.

I hope that you Nina are in better health than you were. I know that your worry over the Admiral's condition, added to your own illness, made you less well than you might otherwise have been. I noted the courage with which you visited the hospital, never in any way showing the pain that was in you both mentally and physically. You are of the heroic mold!

I never hear from Chisk any more and I don't know where he is. I imagine that he is on duty in Washington, but, whether that is so or not, is extremely problematical. I am very fond of him and of his swell wife. I do hope that they are both happy and if you see them, say hello for me.

Things have been going on, to date, very well indeed. My ship is a fine ship and has done very commendable service. In fact, I have been told so by many of the High Command and I feel sure that their judgement was studied and thorough and that the Minneapolis stands high everywhere. We

all mail

0563

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

have been in some very tight spots but the Creator has always seen fit to guide our hands so that we came through practically without damage. We know that we are accomplishing things out here and we are very proud to be associated with those who are fighting this Pacific war. You would be very impressed by the high character and devotion of all officers and men, and it has been inspiring to me to note the way they go into action. The Navy is living up to its traditions. It is quite remarkable to see how the reserves fit into the common whole. You, of course, having been in the Navy such a long time, can understand this, but I think that many who are not familiar with our type of military organization, would doubt that men could fit into the cog so well.

I am feeling fine and I am enjoying my job. The Commander of the cruisers said to me, "you don't seem to have lost any weight in these operations", and I replied that that was so but that any man who was doing the job he loved to do, would have difficulty in losing weight. However, I look about the same as I did when I last had the good fortune to see you in Washington.

There isn't anything new to report, but I am sending you a little picture of me, taken on the bridge of the ship, which I hope you will think is pretty good.

Best of luck to you and to the Admiral, as ever,

Your old friend,

E.W. BATES,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

Mrs. Frank Clark,
Duesden Apartments, Apt.#45,
Kalerawa Road and Connecticut Ave.,
Washington, D. C.

0564

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO. CALIFORNIA

19 March 1944.

Dear Captain Daniel:

I am writing to you because I understand that you have the cruiser desk. Heretofore I have written to Captain Roper, but I find that he has to refer the matter to you, so I am writing to the fountain of wisdom direct.

In the last few days, two of my Heads of Departments have been ordered detached with one replacement ordered. I am quite satisfied with this setup and I personally think that the changes you have made will be advantageous. Commander McIver and Commander Parker have both done splendid work for me and the fitness reports I plan to send in for them will loudly resound. They are both capable and both are quite healthy, although I would suggest, if it is your policy, that they both be given thirty days leave if they are to be ordered to sea duty again. Commander McIver has been on board for about four years and Commander Parker is nearing the end of his third. I want to request also, if possible, that both of them be given destroyer commands as that is what they wish and I think that their services in the Minneapolis merit such an assignment. Commander McIver, however, has had no destroyer experience.

Some time ago I wrote to Captain Roper concerning my Lieutenants and I got a nice letter back from him. Then I wrote him a second letter to which I have received no reply. Our mail for at least one whole month is missing so that whether he has written to me or not I do not know. I won't bother you with what I wrote him about, but if you will pull the letter out of his file, you will find what it is that I wish to learn.

No orders have, as yet, been received for Commander Grider, the Navigator, and I frankly say I am not expecting any. As I wrote Captain Roper, there is no one available at present for training as Navigator. The most likely officers have either been on here for four or five years, or have in for special courses, or are too junior for a heavy cruiser. I should appreciate your kindness very much if you would see to it that the Navigator is not detached without a competent relief from the regular line of the Navy. I note that the San Francisco recently received such a navigator and I feel that I likewise either should have a relief with similar background or else Commander Grider should remain for the present. I know that I am not unreasonable in this as I have talked this over with the Division Commander, as well as with the Big Staff, and I would say the general unofficial opinion is that the navigator should be a line officer of the regular establishment.

On mail

0565

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

I know that you are very busy, but I do hope that you can have time to write me and tell me what you plan to do with my officers within say the next six months or year, so that I may make plans accordingly.

With best regards to you, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

Captain John C. Daniel, USN,
Office of Personnel,
Navy Department,
Washington 25, D.C.

0566

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

10 April 1944.

Dear Admiral:

I cannot begin to tell you with what emotion all your Alley Cats viewed your departure this morning. Needless to say, your talk to the crew of the Wichita was not only an excellent one, but also a moving one.

We, on the Minneapolis, appreciate the few months when your flag was proudly flying at our mainmast and we hope that during that time we measured up to all that you expected of us. Certainly, if I may say so, you measured up to all that we had heard and expected of you.

We know that in your new assignment you will be quite happy. The submarine war is far from over and who can say that it will not reach again into the Caribbean. If it does, we know that the old Giffin touch - the thing that made the Alley Cats famous - will finish the subs off once and for all.

I know that I speak for my ship when I say to you that you have done us, the Division, and all divisions, whether Battleship, Cruiser, Destroyer or Carrier, a great deal of good by your leadership and courageous example.

Whether any of your Alley Cats are to fly their flags is in the hands of the Gods, but if they do, they will endeavor to imitate the example of leadership and good common sense with which you have always taught them. The Alley Cat tradition must never die and it will not be permitted to die.

We do not know yet who your relief will finally be, but naturally all of us feel that Admiral Oldendorf is the one to carry the Alley Cat's burden.

Your message to the Minneapolis was published this morning. Your new message will be given by me to the ship's company in a few minutes over the general announcing system. We appreciate both messages and hope to prove worthy.

With warmest regards to you and to your family; with congratulations on your promotion to Vice Admiral, and with confidence that, in the future, your success will be equally brilliant, I am as ever,

Your old Flag Captain,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

Rear Admiral Robert C. Giffin, USN,
c/o Commander Cruisers, Pacific Fleet,
c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

0567

UNCLASSIFIED

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

12 April 1944.

Dear Admiral Kalbfus:

Your last letter to me, which was dated 21 March, I received fairly rapidly. It appears, however, that mail moves slower in a Westerly direction than in an Easterly direction. This is what is to be expected because of the difficulty of making suitable connections. From here it is practically sure to go through, whereas moving Westerly it may get stopped anywhere.

I was glad to see that my belief was correct and that Mrs. Kalbfus was now fully recovered from her ailments. She is a most remarkable woman, and filled with a desire to be helpful to others. No wonder she needed a rest! And no wonder nature became the doctor and saw to it that she took it. We have a remarkable friend in Doctor Nature, if we would only listen to him. We seem to forget that our body is a machine just the same as an automobile or an electric refrigerator and should be given equal attention.

I was particularly interested to hear what you had to say about the Board of Education headed by Admiral Pye. As you and I both know, education in the broad sense has not received very much attention in the Navy. The only reason for a Navy is to safeguard our nation and, therefore, all officers should know something of the art of war. Instead, our Navy has stressed more the operation of ships and the technical features connected with it. This is a dangerous situation. I remember that Herbert Rosinski, the German strategist, in speaking at Harvard University, said a few years ago - I should guess about 1939 - that the British had allowed him to go over their records at the Admiralty and to study the logs of the fleet for the period of about 1880 to 1905. These dates are merely a guess with me, but are, I believe, nearly correct. He said that he had been trying to ascertain what thoughts had animated the British Commanders - that is, what strategic thoughts during these years - and he said he was horrified to find that there wasn't a single instance where the Commanders had had any thoughts other than "spit and polish". He said that this indicated the danger into which a Navy fell when it was over size and when it seemed to have command of all of the oceans.

We did a considerable amount of training at sea during peace times with problems which I think were helpful to the High Command but the Commanders were nearly always near the retirement age and, having learned the information and received the training, they were usually removed and replaced by others. This cycle was repeated time and time again.

I still feel that the study of war should be started at the Naval Academy. I still feel that the language - and there is a language - of strategists which is the same in all nations, should be made plain to the Midshipmen. They should understand objectives, physical objectives, courses of action, capabilities etc. They should have a rough idea of the mental effort that is

0568

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS

C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

necessary to draw up a strategic plan and should not only understand the Order Form but be able to put out Orders for the very lowest echelons based on that form.

The War College should either be vastly enlarged to insure that all officers of the Navy go through, or it should remain at its present size and should have as students only those officers who are especially qualified for such training. Had this been done before, perhaps today we would not have numerous officers in command who have not been trained along War College lines. One Admiral told me yesterday that he seriously regretted that he had never been to the War College and that he realized his shortcomings very heavily. He said that he had protested to Admiral King, saying that he did not feel that he had the qualifications for command but Admiral King told him to go ahead and carry out his orders.

The military future of the United States is, of course, dear to everyone of us. Had we established a strong military policy long ago, I have no doubt but that the enemy would not have attacked us at Pearl Harbor. However, establishing a strong military policy is not enough, unless the military character of the people is high also. I am not so sure that the military character of the American public, at present, is high. The performance of our troops in Italy have not been impressive, and the fact that the public has to told only the successes and not the failures is also an indication that there is something lacking somewhere in our military character. I suppose this comes from the fact that the training of our people from birth to the grave has always been against war and in favor of peace. For some strange reason the people have always been told that we were the great Colossus against which nothing might prevail.

Here we are out in the Pacific working hard, planning admirably, and succeeding remarkably. But none of us are under any illusions that this rapid and non-costly movement will continue forever. We realize that this Japanese enemy is a dangerous enemy and one that is so fanatical that one may expect and should expect anything from him. As we progress westward and reach into his empire, sooner or later, at a time probably of his own choosing, we may expect strong enemy action. We will turn it aside because we here expect it. But from what I hear from the broadcasts on the coast, the war is won, the road to Tokyo is open and we will be there in the morning. If the broadcasters only had access to your Green Book where you say, "The Commander may not safely view the succession of events with complacency even though the situation appears to be unfolding according to plan. ***** - As the situation unfolds, everything is viewed with intelligent suspicion," I doubt if they would blow so hard.

UNCLASSIFIED

0569

UNCLASSIFIED

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Things are going along quite well for us out here so far. It would do your heart good to see the fleet and to realize what you and others of your time have forged for us to use. Carriers, Battleships, Cruisers, Destroyers, Supply ships, all are visible and exist in fact, instead of on a piece of paper. We who man these ships are proud to have the opportunity of doing so, and we will ever be faithful to the trust reposed in us.

Since I have been in the battle area I have often thought of two of the important items that I worked on at the War College under your guidance. One of them had to do with bombardment. My board consisted of now General Caldwell of the Marine Corps as the Marine member, of myself as the Navy member, and of now General Wood of the Marine Corps Air Arm as the Air member. We worked hard and thoroughly on the question of the amount of ammunition necessary for the type of operations which we are now going through. The figure we arrived at was, I understand, about six times larger than that of the General Board of which you are now a member. Our figures were not accepted, at least not at first, but I feel confident that they were almost correct. Also there was the Board which handled the question of the battleship versus the Carrier. I think that their estimate on the number of carriers was a little low, but if we had had the carriers recommended, we would have been able to strike offensive blows much earlier than we did. There is nothing like patting yourself on the back, but I feel sure that you and your War College at that time, did the nation a great deal of good because of the foresight and courage which you exhibited in putting down what you believed to be correct even though it was far in advance of the general thoughts at the time.

I haven't learned much new here over what I learned at the War College. The type of operations that we are going through are right along what we did then. Although weapons change they do not change very rapidly so far as the Navy is concerned.

We lost our Admiral the other day and are getting a new one, but who he is I don't know. I think my Admiral will come in and see you as he is an old friend of yours. He wrote me a splendid fitness report when he left which I happened to see because he wrote it on a fitness report blank that I had not yet signed. I don't know whether fitness reports are of any particular use these days.

You will be interested to know that I have received several commendations on my battle action reports which, of course, is gratifying. I have tried, as I have said before, to place my experience, not only at sea, but on the Staff at the War College, in use to the common good. Until I received these comments I had no way of knowing whether they were being received in a friendly way or not. I wish to gain nothing during this war except victory and I personally have no interest except in victory. At least that has been my attitude. So it is gratifying to have received these commendations from Commander Cruisers on this subject. Commander Cruisers said, in part, on my last commendation, "This report is one of the best of its kind ever received

0570

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

by this office and the Commanding Officer is to be commended for his excellent work as well as for the opinions expressed therein." My Admiral wrote in my fitness report, under paragraph 8, "Commended by Commander Cruisers and CinCPac for his excellent reports on Wake, Gilbert and Marshall Island campaigns." I have heard nothing about the commendation from CinCPac, but I know that I was told by members of his staff that the Minneapolis Battle Action Reports received more attention than any other and that some of our comments were the guide for future operations. I hope that this is true.

There isn't much new to comment on. Everything that we do is secret of course, but I know that in time you will be even more familiar with what we are doing than I, who was in it, and you can see the whole action much better from a distance than we can who were in the heart of it.

I don't know how much longer I will be out here. I know that most officers are detached after about one year and, although I have only been at sea seven months, I have been in commandine. Therefore, I have been wondering what would happen to me, but no one knows. New admirals suddenly appear in the press, but whence they come no one knows. In some ways it is too bad because there seems to be more thought about promotions than there is about the enemy. I have objected to this among my own officers, and have suggested that the enemy is their first objective.

With warmest personal regards to you and to Mrs. Kalbfus and with deep appreciation for the interest you have always had in me, I am as ever,

Yours very sincerely,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U. S. Navy.

Admiral Edward C. Kalbfus, USN,
General Board,
Navy Department,
Washington, D.C.

UNCLASSIFIED

0571

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

12 April 1944.

Dear Admiral:

That was a very nice thought of yours to have included the Minneapolis in your speech before the Commonwealth Club and we liked being so favorably mentioned. It was very nice of you also to send me a copy of your remarks, and I have passed it out to those who were on board this ship at the time of your epic adventure.

Your address is certainly realistic, and will do a lot, I trust, to stop the crazy people in your area who think that the war is over. You have been there and you know the enemy. The broadcasters have not been there and do not know the enemy, and I hope do not know their own people either. Somebody ought to stop them. They fill the air with tripe and I have had many friends write to me, critical of them.

I hope that you are enjoying your new job. I know that you would like to be here with us. Someday I trust you will have the chance to fly your flag at sea again. Until then I know that the Twelfth Naval District will improve under your firm guidance.

With best regards, I am as ever,

Very sincerely yours,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

Rear Admiral C.H. Wright, USN,
Commandant, 12th Naval District,
San Francisco, California.

0572

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

12 April 1944

Officer in Charge,
Office of Naval Officer Procurement,
Central Tower, Call Building,
San Francisco, California.

Sir:

This letter will serve to introduce my cousin, Mr. John R. Fritschi, who is seeking a commission in the Navy. Mr. Fritschi is a University of California graduate, is married and is the father of two children.

I wish to say, leaving aside the relationship, that I have known Mr. Fritschi from the day of his birth until now, and I can readily say that he is a man of exceptionally high character, of high capabilities, and is well worthy of a commission in our Navy.

Mr. Fritschi can tell you better than I can what he has done in a business way, but I can say that starting from scratch he has built up for himself in the last few years, a very flourishing insurance business which has provided a very satisfactory livelihood for his family. The young man has ability.

Were I not out here in the broad Pacific combating the enemy, I should have asked for nothing better than to have had the privilege of introducing Mr. Fritschi to you. Unfortunately I can not do so, but I can commend him to you in this fashion.

I do not desire any favor in this case. I think people should be assigned commissions on merit, but I feel confident that Mr. Fritschi is well fitted to join the commissioned group.

Very sincerely,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

0573

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

12 April 1944

Dear John:

I don't know how you are making out on your commission but I am giving you the enclosed letter which you may take to the Office of Procurement and present it to the officer-in-charge as an introduction.

I wish you had written to me to tell me what your difficulties were. You have seen fit not to do so, and I respect your reasons.

If you have not got a commission do not hesitate to deliver this without fail, and immediately.

With best regards to you and Jane, as well as to your beloved mother, I am as ever,

Your affectionate cousin,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

Mr. John R. Fritschi,
727 Peru Street,
Alameda, California.

0574

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

12 April 1944

Dear Admiral Fye:

It has been some months since I have written to you and I am regretful at my failure to write more frequently. I hope that I am forgiven.

I have been wondering for some time now about the new book, which you were working on when I left the War College, to replace, or to amplify the Green Book. I have been wondering whether you have completed it or not. I know that it involved tremendous mental labor, but I have no doubt that if any one could have completed it, you would have. What brings this to mind is this. The other day we received a despatch which told us what should be contained in paragraph 1 of the order form, as regards "information". The message stated, I think, that this was out of a new book called "Naval Directives and the Order Form". I immediately decided that this must be your book as what was said about "information" was beautifully worded, and seemed all embracing.

I am quite interested in hearing what you have to say in regard to "assumptions". I don't think that this subject is well understood out here, and I have noted that most of the Plans are inadequate on this point. They say, for example, that the "assumptions" are as in the Basic Directive. This, of course, is poppycock, as assumptions for each specific Command are based on that Command's own particular task. The Green Book never seemed to me to be entirely clear on this subject, and nothing much has ever been done to improve it. I do hope that you have given this point a lot of attention.

The Operation Plans and Orders put out now are a remarkable improvement over those issued heretofore. This shows that even the uninformed can become informed by intelligent study as time goes on. I have been wondering whether all Commands make full Estimates when they should and could. There have been times when I have felt that some of the fairly high Command Plans were somewhat haphazard, and not based on that thorough analysis which the Green Book gives, and which I am very confident your book gives even better, as yours is the result of practical experience in war.

I received word the other day that you were the head of some "Board on Education", that is, that you were working on comprehensive plans for the education of naval officers from the Naval Academy until retirement. I cannot imagine a board of more importance. Having taken a post graduate course, and having served on the post graduate staff; having taken a War College course, and having served on the War College Staff; I have found my training invaluable. I have also found that most officers who do not have such training regret it very much. It has been my experience that on

0575

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

12 April 1944

every ship I have commanded, my officers at first have found me difficult, and have even referred to me as "tough". Later they have become my best friends because they have found that what I was trying to do was to educate them along sound lines. I think that the same thing has occurred on this ship. Yesterday two officers who were detached came to me separately to thank me for my efforts in helping them along and in improving their mental and practical knowledge. One was a Commander, the other a lieutenant. This shows appreciation of the highest sort.

The Minneapolis is a fine ship. Our Admiral, who was detached yesterday, called me over and told me that the ship was very smart and well handled. If this is so, why is it? I think that the answer is, in part, that the Captain was educated and trained along sound lines, and that he had a competent group of officers who wanted to learn and did learn their jobs. They want to be educated. I find them highly interested in the War College. This includes not only Reserves, but also Regulars who say they can see the need for "mental training in war". I am quite gratified.

I am telling you all the above, not to give, in any way, the impression that I think I am good. No, not that, but to indicate to you that the need for the proper education and training of officers is apparent everywhere, and is so recognized. Take the case of the Action Reports. Mindful of my experience in the War College with such reports, I draw mine up with care. Then I have my senior officers read them. I explain my attitude and they in return give me theirs. By doing this I start them thinking; I am thus educating them along mental lines. I try to get them to understand the Operation, to understand the tasks and the Decisions, and to realize the enormous mental effort necessary to arrive at correct Decisions, especially in the larger problems. As a matter of interest, in this connection, I have received three commendations from Commander Cruisers, and my Admiral said, in my fitness report, that the Commander in Chief Pacific had also commended me. Once again this shows that my education in the War College was not in vain.

As I have indicated above, the Minneapolis has been in a considerable number of actions of major or minor importance. In some she was very near to the enemy and his shells landed very close indeed; in others his shells merely sailed over the bridge and screamed "aloha" as they went by.

It was very pleasing to note the conduct of officers and men during those engagements in which the enemy resisted fiercely. So far as I can see, everyone did his duty and did it well. The fact that we have so far escaped serious injury is probably due to the good Lord and to the educational training which I got at the War College, which I think assisted a great deal. We have had shells land within 15 yards of either side and have had torpedoes miss by but 50 yards.

0576

U. S. S. MINNEAPOLIS
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

12 April 1944

Things are going along very well here now. So far we have had our own way but no one really believes that this condition will obtain forever. I cannot but remember what the Green Book says on this subject - "The Commander may not safely view the succession of events with complacency even though the situation appears to be unfolding according to plan. . . . As the situation unfolds, everything is viewed with intelligent suspicion." I wish that some one would tell the broadcasters about that - that we have a long way to go yet and there is no telling what shape the progress will finally take. I have even, to my surprise, had very senior officers - on shore duty - echo the same sentiments as the broadcasters. This shows the effect of news on the psychology of mortals well above average in common sense and experience. It is surprising!

I was glad to see that our old friend Allan Smith has achieved his two stars. I wasn't impressed with the job that he got, but he will do well there and, in the end, someone has to be there. I also note that Ted Ruddock has changed his suit again. I don't know where he has gone, if anywhere.

I hope that this letter finds both you and Mrs. Pye in the best of health and enjoying your stay at Newport as much as is possible under the circumstances. I know that you would much prefer to be out here with the fighting men than back there where you are. There isn't any doubt in my mind but that if you were here, you would have had equal success to Admiral Spruance. The type of planning that Admiral Spruance is doing is right along the War College lines and it would be "duck soup" for you. However, life being what it is and the Navy being what it is, we have to go where they say and do the best we can while we are there. I am more than overjoyed that I have command of this ship. Although a new battleship is a greater command in the eyes of the ignorant Navy, these cruisers, particularly Cruiser Division Six, have been in the middle of it all the time. I don't believe that there has been any ship out here, even in Cruiser Division Six, which has been in more affairs than has my command. This covers action against shore batteries to action against enemy cruisers.

With warmest personal regards to you and to Mrs. Pye, and my appreciation for all your kindness to me in the past, I am as ever,

Very sincerely yours,

R.W. BATES,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

Dear Admiral William S. Pye, USN,
U.S. Naval War College,
Newport, Rhode Island.

0577